DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 265 438 CG 018 762

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TITLE From Theory to Reality: Simplified Approach to Staff Training and Management.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (67th, Portland, OR, March 31-April 3, 1985).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classification; *College Students; Developmental Stages; Higher Education; *Resident Assistants; Social Adjustment; *Social Development; *Staff Development; *Student Adjustment; *Student Development
IDENTIFIERS Blooms Taxonomy

ABSTRACT

This document is a plan for tracking students' social growth by the college resident assistant and for evaluating the students' growth and the resident assistant's performance. The plan, based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Affective Cognitive Processes, includes a clarified purpose, objectives for implementation, shared assessment values, and continuing strategies for advancement along the continuum of development. According to this plan, resident staff agree on stages of development and evaluation of the stages, and strategies are developed to help students' development. Seven stages are described for a student's integration into the campus community. It is proposed that a student develops by coming to: (1) know that others recognize his campus presence; (2) feel wanted; (3) realize that significant others know him; (4) feel accepted; (5) become involved in the community; (6) feel committed to the community; and (7) provide service or leadership to the community. An amplified taxonomy by Sharon Royster giving behavior and conversation characteristics for each stage is included. A personal taxonomy development chart and a completed example are also provided. (ABL)

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Submitted to:
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
67th Annual Conference

"FROM THEORY TO REALITY: A SIMPLIFIED APPROACH TO STAFF TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT"

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ABSTRACT

How do you teach your paraprofessional staff the theory of student development? How do you know if your resident staff is actually doing what you've hired and trained them to do? How do you incorporate ongoing assessment, strategy development and effective programming in your professional and paraprofessional staff?

The taxonomy of student development aims specifically at the above. This is a process-oriented scheme which thrusts staffers into an active, ongoing process feedback as to staff effectiveness.

TAXONOMY OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

by
Robert J. Imhoff

How do you teach your paraprofessional staff the theory of student development? How do you convey that theory must become reality? How does development theory impact programming? How do you know if your resident staff is actually doing what you've hired and trained them to do? How do you incorporate ongoing assessment, as well as ongoing strategy development, in your professional and paraprofessional staff?

The taxonomy of student development aims specifically at the above. This is a process-oriented scheme which thrusts staffers into an active, ongoing process of design, assessment and organismic programming. Further, the taxonomy enables an administrator feedback as to staff effectiveness on a weekly basis.

In an effort to bridge the gap between student developmental theory and implementation of a model for practitioners, the taxonomy of student development has been simplified. Conceived originally by Dr. Charles Roose as a take-off from Bloom's Taxonomy of affective Cognitive Processes, the model allows the practitioner to have significant input and ownership of a tactical plan of implementation. Such a plan incorporates a clarified purpose, objectives for

implementation, shared assessment values and continuing strategies for advancement along the continuum of development.

Resident staff, as part of the initial how-to training effort, meet together to devise and agree upon six or seven stages of development. These stages or levels are to represent actual outcomes sought by the entire program. This brainstorming session establishes shared concepts and understandings of the specific goals which theory is intended to accomplish. This sequence is created or arrived at through actual experience, as opposed to being "taught."

When agreement is achieved as to the stages (sought-after outcomes of program efforts), means of evaluating and measuring each stage are explored. How does one assess whether a particular student is at one level or another on the taxonomy of development? Such an effort demands that the staff begin to quantify indices of impact and establish measurable criteria for assessment.

After criteria have been clarified, consecutive sessions are planned to consider and devise methods and strategies to advance students along the previously established

continuum of development. These weekly strategy planning sessions include assessment of successful efforts as well as unsuccessful efforts. This ongoing process accomplishes two vital functions. First, an ongoing assessment of student contact is realized. Second, the function of programming takes on real notions of functional development which intentionally aims at pre-established outcomes.

The following vectors, or stages, of development are examples of categories selected to identify various steps in the process of development for each student to integrate into the campus community.

1. Identified -- Each student must know that others in the community (especially significant others) recognize his/her presence. This must start immediately upon arrival on campus. The R.A. must not only be able to identify his/her people, he/she must lead each to the identification of others.

2. Included -- Every student must sense being wanted and welcomed in both formal and informal meetings and activities. No one should experience physical loneliness; no one should experience spiritual loneliness.

3. Known -- Each student must realize that significant others are "knowing" him/her. There is a commitment on the part of others to meet and understand the person behind the name and the face. This is a non-evaluative, non-judging knowing. The inner-self of the student is important and desirable to those in leadership roles.

4. Accepted -- Closely related to being known, being accepted is the experience of feeling valued by an important other. Once a student has risked being known (or accepted the fact that being known is unavoidable), he/she must experience acceptance in the community. Acceptance must be given on the basis of what "is," not what "ought to be."

At this stage in the process of development, the student begins to look outside himself. He/she becomes less egocentric. Interdependence begins to replace independence and relationships are seen as part of self, not something outside of self for the benefit of self.

5. Involved -- At this stage, the student either initiates or is led into "investing" in the community. He/she risks investing some of his/her resources in the health or some segment of the community. He/she begins moving from being a "taker" to a "giver." His/her giving, however, is tentative and evaluated in light of his/her feelings of success.

6. Committed -- The concept of community begins to be worthy of commitment in spite of difficulties. The student sees something larger than himself/herself that is worthy of some of his/her priorities. The R.A. is now a co-laborer, not an other. The student is generating his/her own participation in the community.

7. Serving/leading -- The student creates and/or operationalizes avenues of growth-producing activities and relationships for other. (The by-product of this is a great leap in the student's growth.) Formally or informally, the student serves/leads others toward a full range of community experiences which will contribute to human growth and fulfillment.

Implementation

With the taxonomy in hand, the Residence Director meets weekly with each R.A. to track with the R.A. the progress of

each student on a given floor. Thus, R.D.'s and R.A.'s are developing patterns of accountability which insure that every student is reviewed. R.A.'s can easily identify isolated students as well as the scope of their personal responsibility.

The staff soon becomes aware of the need to develop strategies and programs to facilitate growth along the established continuum and therefore plan programs and events directly tied to sought-after outcomes. This consciousness coupled with the planning which it prompts fosters an intense ownership of development and appropriate measurability. Thus, the gap between theory and reality can be bridged.

Amplified Taxonomy for Community Building
Sharon Royster of Biola University
ACSD 1985

I. Stage 1 — Identified (. . . am I . .)

Self-talk:
- Who am I? Where am I? When am I supposed to . . . ?
- Whose am I? Who/to whom/with whom am I supposed to . . . ?
- How am I doing/looking/acting/ . . . compared to . . . ?

Conversation Content:
- Introductions
- Asking/answering information questions
- Self-identification (I am from . . . I played . . .)
- Descriptions of recent past (spent the summer in Europe, at camp . . .)

Observable Behavior:
Looking at maps, looking at others, looking in mirrors, clinging to the known, withdrawing temporarily, changing clothes, getting lost/found, writing/calling home/friends to report events, wearing/reading nametags.

Focus of energy: Recognizing:
- people
- places
- times

Being recognized

Pay-off: Familiarity

II. Stage 2 — Included ("me too . . . you too")

Self-talk:

"I know I'm welcome"

"They don't mind if I come along."

"This sure beats eating alone."

"I'm beginning to think I could like it here."

Conversation Content:

"Yes, I'd like to . . . "

"Would you like to . . .?"

Expressions of preferences, "what I like about . . .

what I don't like about . . . "

Observable Behavior:

Letters and calls to others are beginning to describe people as well as events.

Joining, signing up, drafting others, inviting . . .

Routines are established based on feelings of inclusion (where I sit in classes, where I eat, when).

Focus of energy: Finding where I fit?

Pay-off: Belonging

III Stage 3 — Known (Am I safe here?)

Self-talk:
"Why did I/he/she say that?"
"I can trust . . .?"
"I am more than a number . . ."
"I can't believe I told them that."

Conversation Content:
Revealing uniqueness, individuality, idiosyncracies
Inquiring about uniqueness, individuality and idiosyncracies of others
Follow-up conversations: "How was your test/weekend at home/date?

Observable Behavior:
Playing practical jokes/kidding
Dropping in unexpectedly
Revealing/keeping confidences
Risk-taking, spontaneity, expanding sphere of familiarity,
Participating in class discussions.

Focus of energy:
Revealing self in the context of inclusion
Retaining personal information about others

Pay-off
Understanding/being understood

IV. Stage 4 — Accepted (even though . . .)

Self-talk:
- Even though . . . I flunked my test . . . snore/overslept I still . . . "
- Self-affirmation based on feedback from others

Conversation Content:
- Less edited conversations
- Freedom to disagree
- Sharing something personal
- Willingness to say "no" without fear of rejection

Observable Behavior:
- Not always going along with the crowd
- Initiating with others in areas of personal interest (i.e., "would you like to go fishing/horseback riding?")

Focus of energy:
- Being accepted based on who I am not who or what I ought to be.

Pay-off:
- Feeling valued by significant others for who I am.

V. Stage 5 — Involved (beginning of interdependence)

Self-talk:
"I wonder what I can do?"
"I have something to offer."
"I would be missed if . . ."

Conversation Content:
Recapping shared experiences ("Remember when . . . ")
Evaluating ("it might have been more fun if . . .")
("We probably could have been more sensitive to . . .")

Observable Behavior:
Giving, volunteering, band-wagonning, recruiting, promoting, campaigning, reminding self and others of commitments.

Focus of energy:
Giving, participating, contributing, investment

Pay-off:
Valued participation

VI. Stage 6 — Committed ("The Plunge")

Self-talk: Personalization

"I need to do what I can . . . "

"I don't dare not show up . . . "

"I don't mind giving up . . . for . . . "

Conversation Content: Lots of personal plural promouns

"our" "we" "my" "ours"

Reinforcing, reminiscing, expression of needs, hurts, regrets, apologies, expression of corporate dreams, visions, values.

Observable: Some things have become automatic commitments, sacrificing, forfeiting, compromising, dependability, availability, promptness, physical contact (hugging, hitting) coded behaviors, signs, private jokes.

Focus of energy: "The cause/group"

Pay-off: "It was worth it . . . even if I had to miss . . . "

VII. Stage 7 — Serving/Leading (modeling)

Self-talk:	Relatedness consciousness
	Cause-effect consciousness "If I do this, then what . . ."
	Visualizing potential in lives of others
	How I contribute to the welfare of others
Conversation Content	Encouraging, affirming, comforting, confronting
	"What can I do to make it easier/better?"
	"Let me help iwth . . . "
	"I've been there so I understand . . ."
Observable Behavior:	leading, assuming responsibility, shaping behavior of others
	Creating
	Initiating
	Responding
	Anticipating needs
Focus of Energy	Enabling others for their best.
Pay-off:	Contributing to growth and fulfillment of others
	Intrinsic

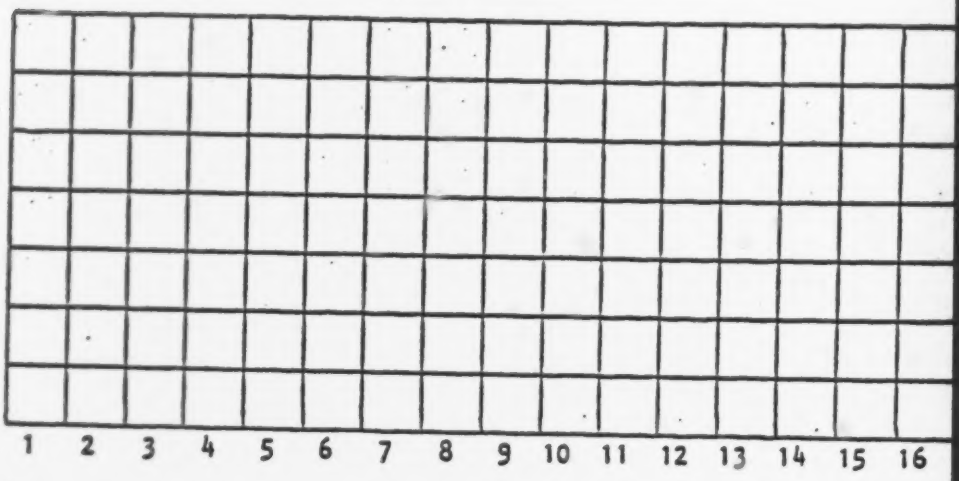
PERSONAL TAXONOMY DEVELOPMENT CHART

Student _____

Residence Hall _____

Resident Assistant _____

7. Serving/Leading
6. Committed
5. Involved
4. Accepted
3. Known
2. Included
1. Identified



WEEK OF:	COMMENTS

TAXONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT ADVANCEMENT STRATEGIES

Approximately six to nine weeks into the academic calendar, staff seem to note a stationary period developing in terms of fellow students continuing on the Taxonomy of Student Development. Progress on "development" seems to have bottomed out and progress seems to have stopped. When this appears to occur, the following observations may be relevant:

1. Staff evaluations may have had "halo vision" during the initial observations and advanced people too readily. Observations over a period of time tend to establish more accurate readings.

2. R.A.'s often feel the urge to record progress to establish the fact that they, themselves, are doing a good job of "development." Thus, contamination of observation is very possible, though not intended.

3. Actual development may require further facilitation or structure to demonstrate progression and growth.

In light of the above, some reflection may be helpful. When the staff team designed the stages of development, or vectors, time was spent establishing the areas of growth that were desired and those behaviors which would be measurable to demonstrate such growth. Visions for development were begun. Now, as things seem to slow down, staff are asking, "What can we do to help students advance to the next level?" When such questions appear, the time is right to organize, re-think the stages, and brainstorm as to ideas which might work to advance students. This brainstorm think-tank assists the staff in the following:

-- To recapture the overall objectives and "own" them;
-- To visualize behaviors which might evidence achievement of these objectives; and
-- To share creatively and suggest designs for specific experiences which may advance students along the developmental process.

Example: An R.A. may wish to assist a fellow student to advance from being known to being involved. Another R.A. may suggest that she facilitate advancement of one of her students by asking the student to organize an all-floor adoption of an orphan for a year. The effort is a great success, as well as assisting a student's advancement along the stages of development by becoming involved with everyone on the floor.

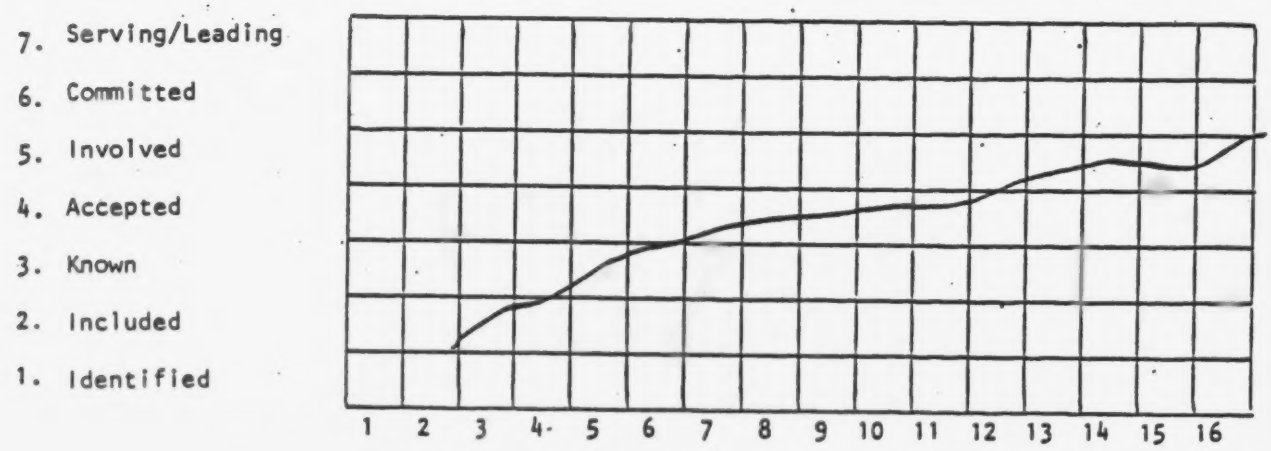
Brainstorming together should create several options for the various stages of development. Such an effort helps the staff keep objectives clear and understandings "team-created." Brainstorming may be necessary periodically at intervals all year long.

PERSONAL TAXONOMY DEVELOPMENT CHART

Jody Lynn
Student

Stewart Hall
Residence Hall

Anne Smith
Resident Assistant



WEEK OF:	COMMENTS
Sept. 1	Jody is very quiet and appears to be alone a lot. She's friendly but very shy. Wednesday she talked to me about going home. Friday I asked her to the beach bash and she seemed to really open up.
Sept. 2	I asked Jody to organize this Saturdays trip to the beach and 18 girls signed up to go. Jody seemed very happy and has been leaving her door open a lot and taking some initiative to step out.
Sept. 3	I was so busy this week I really didn't even see Jody. I'll see her tonight. Sorry!
Sept. 4	Jody seems to have become good friends with Cindy and Lisa. They went out 3 times together this week. Also, she is leading one of the study groups.
Oct. 5	Jody's in love . . . all she talks about is Steve B. They have doubled with Carrie & Jeff. She seems very happy.
Oct. 6	Jody and Steve are history. Jody was really down Tuesday night-her suite-mates plus 3 other girls took her to Tommy's to cheer her up.

WEEK OF:	COMMENTS
Oct. 7	Jody had the flu this week and the S.I.C. committee brought her all her meals. Though sick, she seems in good spirits.
Oct. 8	This week for the first time I saw Jody reach out to Melody and include her in a Tommy's run. I was impressed! Jody is reaching out!
Nov. 9	I was sick this week and Jody brought me a Sundae!
Nov. 10	Fall Break! Yea!
Nov. 11	Jody seems to be doing ok . . . I really only saw her twice this week.
Nov. 12	Thanks for Thanksgiving! Jody had a rough week as she came in late three times . . rumor is that she went dancing with a known doper. Smells fishy.
Dec. 13	Confronted Jody and she admitted doing dope. Put her on social probation this week and three dis. committee women are committing to her.
Dec. 14	Jody dumped B.H. and seems back to her old happy self.
Dec. 15	Jody volunteered to help organize our Christmas party and is pitching in real well.
Dec. 18	N/A

* December 6th -- placed on social probation -- attitudes great -- don't expect any further problems.

* Semester evaluation -- Adjusted well, growing -- potential leader?